

# Youth Outdoor Education Intern

## Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve



Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve is seeking a graduate or under-graduate student intern from Adams State College for upcoming summer season. Under-graduate credits and a stipend will be available.

### Major duties of the intern:

- Provides leadership and acts in a mentoring capacity for participants in the Ambassadors for Wilderness youth program. Leads young people (aged 13-18) in backcountry setting, modeling safe and responsible wilderness habits. Teaches and performs Leave No Trace ethics, outdoor skills, natural history, leadership, and communication. Uses the Ambassadors for Wilderness Risk Management Plan and GRSA Safety Toolbox as guiding documents to ensure a safe and healthy environment for student participants and staff. (65%)
- Assists in logistical duties, planning, and evaluation of Ambassadors for Wilderness program. Maintains outdoor gear and other learning materials in good condition. (10%)
- May prepare and present curriculum-based education programs for school groups visiting the dunes during the busy spring season (primarily late April – late May), depending on course schedule and budget. Topics may vary but will focus on primary interpretive themes of Great Sand Dunes (dune formation, diverse habitat, National Park Service values, etc.) (10%)
- Assists with interpretive operations (i.e. visitor center desk, roving, interpretive programs) as needed during summer. (5%)
- Conducts independent research on varied topics for the purpose of providing resource education programs. Learns about park resources by attending in-park training, reading park research materials and maps, and by interviewing other park rangers or staff, researchers, and other professionals. (5%)
- Assists in performing service projects with trail crews, vegetation crews, and Visitor & Resource Protection rangers. Will follow all safety guidelines while performing work with hand tools and other equipment. (5%)
- May serve as a member of all-risk operations, such as search and rescue or wildland or structural fire control within the scope of training and certification. May perform emergency medical services within the scope of training and certification.
- This is a professional-level internship. The intern's work will be evaluated by professional interpretive and educational standards, with the goal of continuous improvement. A uniform is required and will be provided.

### Knowledge/experience required by the position:

- Knowledge of and basic experience in interpretive or educational skills. Ability to prepare formal education programs and speak before sizable and varied groups. Ability to recognize learning and developmental levels and tailor presentations to meet those needs. Ability to organize and present oral and written reports, suggestions, correspondence, and other work products.
- Knowledge of and experience in basic backpacking and outdoor skills. Group and leadership experience preferable.
- Familiarity with Leave No Trace principles.
- Backcountry travel on foot with a heavy backpack will be required with many assignments requiring standing, walking, hiking moderate to steep terrain, driving motor vehicles, and lifting less than 50 lbs, in both indoor and outdoor settings. Elevations at the work-site range from is 8200' to 12,500' above sea level.
- Ability to learn quickly to gain good knowledge of park operations, procedures, practices, and precedents of one or more elements listed above.
- Ability to learn quickly to gain good knowledge of park geography, facilities, interpretive subject matter, national park and cooperating agency personnel, surrounding area features, park neighbors, etc.
- CPR, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, and other wilderness medicine certifications desired.

**Benefits to the intern:**

- Work experience and knowledge in the disciplines of resource interpretation, teaching techniques, and using the physical outdoor environment as an effective tool to engage learners of all ages.
- Resource knowledge including Great Sand Dunes' geology, hydrology, endemic insects, desert plants, wildlife, etc.
- Experience and knowledge of wilderness management issues including campsite and trail rehabilitation, wilderness character monitoring, risk management, and emergency procedures.
- Public speaking and customer service skills.
- Knowledge of National Park Service history, procedures, and career opportunities.
- Opportunity to cross-train with other divisions including law enforcement, resource management, and facility maintenance.

**Purpose of the internship:**

- Improve the capacity of Great Sand Dunes' educational programs while meeting the academic needs of local students looking to enter the professional world. The intern will gain professional work experience that supports her/his academic career while supporting the interpretation and education goals of the National Park Service. In our educational and interpretive programming, we strive to:
  - 1) encourage citizens, especially young people, to develop an interest in science and learning as well as a sense of stewardship for park resources
  - 2) facilitate visitor understanding and enjoyment of park resources. We understand 'visitors' to include all park audiences, whether visiting physically or intellectually via the web, publications, school programs, etc.
  - 3) facilitate and induce visitor behavior consistent with resource protection by gaining friendly compliance with the laws and rules for safe use of the park and positive exposure to national park values.

**About the location:**

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve is a treasure of visual, geological, and biological surprises—a high mountain valley holding the tallest dunes in North America and flanked by some of the highest peaks in the Rocky Mountains; unique wind-powered geologic systems; insects physically adapted to life in the sand and found nowhere else; alpine lakes and tundra; disappearing creeks; interdunal wetlands and much more!

Nestled in southern Colorado, North America's tallest dunes rise over 750 feet high against the rugged Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The wind-shaped dunes glow beneath the rugged backdrop of the mountains. This geologic wonderland, containing over 30 square miles of massive dunes, became a national monument in 1932. With the passage of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act, resources now also include alpine lakes and tundra, six peaks over 13,000' in elevation, ancient spruce and pine forests, large stands of aspen and cottonwood, grasslands, and wetlands—all habitat for diverse wildlife and plant species.

**To Apply:**

Submit resume and references by April 15<sup>th</sup> to:

Education Specialist  
Great Sand Dunes National Park  
11999 Highway 150  
Mosca, CO 81146

**Questions?**

Education Specialist – Great Sand Dunes  
719-378-6344 or [Melanie\\_Rawlins@nps.gov](mailto:Melanie_Rawlins@nps.gov)

